

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NEA-07

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O R 251330Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9453

INFO USIA

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CONFIDENTIAL NEW DELHI 8412

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJ: POSSIBLE GOI ACTION AGAINST WASHINGTON POST

CORRESPONDENT

1. INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON T.N. KAUL, IN DELHI FOR CONSULATION, INFORMED THE CHARGE "CONFIDENTIALLY" JUNE 25 THAT THE GOI PLANS TO TAKE "DRASTIC ACTION" AGAINST WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT LEW SIMONS FOR THE STORY HE FILED, JUNE 20, REGARDING INDIAN ARMY DIS-AFFECTION. KAUL SAID THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO BASIS FOR SIMONS CLAIM THAT ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF RAINA WAS INSTRUCTED TO DEPLOY ARMY TRUCKS AND PERSONNEL IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR THE CROWD WHICH ATTENDED MRS. GANDHI'S MAJOR SPEECH ON JUNE 20. HE BRANDED AS COMPLETELY UNTRUE SIMON'S ALLEGATION THAT THERE WAS WIDESPREAD RESENTMENT IN THE ARMY OF MRS. GANDHI OVER HER REFUSAL TO RESIGN AFTER THE ALLAHABAD JUDGMENT WENT AGAINST HER. ACCORDING TO KAUL THE GOI HAS LONG BEEN CONCERNED OVER THE INACCURACY OF SIMONS' STORIES AND "HAS TO DRAW THE LINE SOMEWHERE."

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2. THE CHARGE TOLD KAUL THAT HE BELIEVED THIS WOULD BE

AN UNFORTUNATE STEP FOR THE GOI TO TAKE. HE NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A NUMBER OF STORIES AND EDITORIALS IN THE US PRESS WHICH COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA--THE RULE OF THE LAW, ETC.--AND WHICH HAD COMMENDED MRS. GANDHI'S LEADERSHIP. EXPULSION OF SIMONS NOW WOULD INCREASE INDIA'S PRESS PROBLEMS IN THE US AND TURN AROUND THIS FAVORABLE TREND. KAUL STUCK TO HIS LINE THAT THE GOI HAD TO DRAW THE LINE SOMEWHERE.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH KAUL DID NOT EXPLAIN WHAT HE MEANT BY "DRASTIC ACTION," WE ASSUME HE HAS EXPULSION IN MIND. HE SAID THAT HE WAS PASSING THE INFORMATION ALONG CONFIDENTIALLY SO THAT GOI ACTION WOULD NOT COME AS A SURPRISE TO THE EMBASSY. WE DO NOT PLAN TO INFORM SIMONS AT THIS TIME OF KAUL'S COMMENTS. KAUL DID NOT SPECIFICALLY SAY WHAT THE GOI INTENDED TO DO; WE ARE NOT SURE WHETHER THE GOI WILL, IN FACT, DO ANYTHING AT ALL; AND KAUL SAID THAT HE WAS PROVIDING US WITH THIS INFORMATION CONFIDENTIALLY. WE THINK IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE AND PROBABLY PRECIPITATE GOI ACTION WHETHER ORIGINALLY INTENDED OR NOT IF REPORT OF POSSIBLE STEPS AGAINST SIMONS WERE TO "LEAK" IN THE US PRESS. WE REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT, IF IT FEELS IT MUST SPEAK TO THE POST, NOTE OUR CAUTIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

SCHNEIDER

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NNN

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